MUSTE NOTES
News from the A.J. Muste Memorial Institute
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June 11, 2003

Dear Friends,

It's good to be back in the Muste Institute office. My one year sabbatical went by very quickly. Between my household chores and duties, I stayed in touch with the Institute staff and came into the office for meetings. I'm very grateful for the great work Diane Tosh did as acting Executive Director. She is going to continue her commitment to the goals of the Muste Institute by joining the Board of Directors. All of us here are very happy to be able to keep working with her. I also want to recognize the superior jobs done by Program Associate Jane Guskin and Administrative Assistants Rebecca Libed and Karen Zaidberg during my absence. Thanks to all their efforts, I returned to an active and healthy organization which has been working hard to meet the challenges brought on by the war in Iraq and its aftermath.

I'm also pleased to announce the hiring of Jeanne Strole as our new administrative assistant. Jeanne brings a long history as an activist and an impressive set of technical skills to our office. We look forward to her help in keeping our programs running smoothly and insuring that our grants and literature get out quickly to the groups we support.

My time away from the Muste Institute has given me a greater appreciation for our work. I had a chance to talk to many people who were not political activists, but who opposed the war in Iraq and militarism in general. They were seeking ways to express their positions and many attended the recent demonstrations. This experience showed me that we have a much wider audience for our programs. One of my priorities on returning is to improve our outreach and expand our base of support. As always, we count on your help most of all to provide the "building blocks" necessary to expand our mission for peace. Before you take a summer break, make a contribution to the Muste Institute and send us toward the fall ready to help strengthen the growing anti-war movement.

In peace,

Murray Rosenblith

Murray Rosenblith
Executive Director

Grantee Profile:
Free the Slaves

PHOTO BY LLOYD EARL SUTTON, FREE THE SLAVES

Ms. Suraj Kali and her family were enslaved for generations in a stone quarry in India. She finally broke free by helping convince her entire village to revolt against the slaveholder. Although the stone quarry work is still grueling, Ms. Kali and her fellow villagers are now working as free human beings and are sending their children to school.

The Muste Institute gave Free the Slaves a $1,500 grant in September of last year to update their website and email communications. The following article was written for Muste Notes by Jolene Smith, the organization's deputy director. More information about Free the Slaves is available on their website at www.freetheslaves.net.

Ms. Suraj Kali woke every morning at 6 am to begin her workday as a slave—pounding gravel into sand with a hammer. Her family had been held in slavery in Uttar Pradesh, India for generations, children inheriting from their parents an illegal debt that could never be paid off. "My parents, my in-laws, they all died as slaves," she explained.

Sadly, Ms. Kali's story is not uncommon. There are 27 million slaves in the world today—twice the number of people taken from Africa during the Transatlantic Slave Trade. There are more people held in slavery today than at any other time in human history.

For these women, men and children, slavery means being:

- controlled by violence and the threat of violence,
- held against their will, unable to leave, and
- forced to work for no pay.

These people suffer the most egregious human rights abuse imaginable—often including rape and torture in addition to the grueling daily miseries of slavery.

Slavery exists in many different forms around the world but there are two characteristics that distinguish most slavery today from the slavery of the past: slaves today are ***cheap*** and they are ***disposable***. Indeed, there has been such a dramatic fall in the price of slaves that the basic economy of slavery has changed: An average slave in the American South in 1850 cost the equivalent of $40,000; today a slave costs about

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New Sponsored Projects

The Muste Institute's fiscal sponsorship program continues to grow. We welcome our three newest sponsored groups:

East Timor Action Network/U.S. (ETAN) was founded in November 1991 in response to the massacre of 270 peaceful demonstrators by Indonesian soldiers at Santa Cruz cemetery in East Timor's capital city, Dili. ETAN's initial focus was to change U.S. policy in support of self-determination for East Timor, which had been brutally occupied by Indonesia since 1975. After a period of U.N. administration, East Timor finally became independent on May 20, 2002. Since then, ETAN has been working with Timorese organizations on issues including justice for victims of war crimes, restrictions on US military aid to Indonesia, and economic justice. ETAN will continue to provide solidarity and support for East Timor as this newest nation begins its second year of independence amid many tough challenges.

PHOTO BY MIKE FLUGENONNOCK

ETAN activist Nate Osborn is interviewed outside the State Department in Washington on Nov. 12, 1998, at a protest marking the eighth anniversary of the Santa Cruz massacre.

Gabriela Network-New York/New Jersey (GABNet) is the local NY/NJ chapter of a U.S.-based multi-racial, multi-ethnic women's solidarity organization, formed in 1989 by a group of concerned women. GABNet works in cooperation with GABRIELA Philippines, an alliance of 110 women's organizations, institutions and centers. It is a network struggling to create awareness of and opposition to the ways in which Filipinas are exploited by the global sex trade, forced labor migration and militarization. Despite the fact that Filipinos are one of the largest migrant groups in the world, Filipinos, especially women, are under-represented in the public arena. GABNet strives to give voice to the concerns and needs of Filipino women and the wider Filipino community, working on issues that impact the women and children of the Philippines, but which have their roots in the decisions made in the United States.

Indian Point Safe Energy Coalition (IPSEC), formed shortly after September 11, 2001, is comprised of more than 50 environmental, civic and community organizations concerned with the vulnerability of the Indian Point Nuclear Facility located in Buchanan, New York—less than 50 miles from New York City. IPSEC is working to build awareness of the plant's impact on the environment and human health, emphasizing the dangers posed by the risk of equipment failure, human error or terrorism. Through grassroots mobilization, IPSEC has rallied support from community residents in the Hudson Valley, New York City and New Jersey. Since September 2001, IPSEC and its affiliated organizations have gathered over 15,000 signatures calling for the closure and safe decommissioning of Indian Point.

PHOTO BY MATTHEW BARNETT

GABRIELA Network members at an anti-war rally, February 2003.

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A.J. Muste Memorial Institute
339 Lafayette Street, New York, NY 10012
phone (212) 533-4335 fax (212) 228-6193
email: ajmusteinst@igc.org
website: www.ajmuste.org

Executive Director
Murray Rosenblith

Program Associate
Jane Guskin

Administrative Assistant
Jeanne Strole

Superintendent
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Free the Slaves

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$90. Slaves are no longer a major investment worth maintaining. If slaves get ill, are injured, outlive their usefulness, or become troublesome to the slaveholder, they are dumped or killed.

There is slavery in the United States today. Much of today's slavery exists in South Asia and West Africa, but can be found all over the world, including in countries of the Global North. The U.S. State Department reported in 1999 that as many as 50,000 people are trafficked into the United States each year to be forced into unpaid domestic service, sex work or sweatshop labor. The annual revenue from trafficking in human beings is second only to the profits of drug smugglers and illegal arms dealers.

We have slave-made goods in our homes. Most of the work of slaves goes into local economies in the Global South, but there is also a wide range of products tainted by slavery that flow into the global economy. Some slave-made items, like rugs, jewelry, or cigarettes come to us as finished goods. Many other products, such as chocolate, sugar or cotton clothing, can involve slavery somewhere in their processing.

Almost all these products are bought by people who have no idea they are buying into slavery. Most people in the United States believe that slavery ended in 1865. Only a handful of courageous grantmaking institutions in the United States list slavery or trafficking as a program focus. Law enforcement, legislators and the media have only a partial, at best, comprehension of modern slavery. This ignorance is deep and it is dangerous. There is no global problem on the scale of modern slavery that receives so little attention.

The horror of contemporary slavery can seem insurmountable, but there is hope. We can end slavery within our lifetimes. The legal argument has been won—slavery is illegal in every country in the world. The economic argument has been won. The annual revenues of slavery are $13 billion, which seems substantial until considering that $11 billion is spent on blue jeans each year in the U.S. Ending slavery will bring substantial economic harm to no single industry and no single country; the only people who stand to suffer are the slaveholders. The moral argument has been won. Nearly everyone, regardless of economic class or political beliefs, agrees that slavery is unacceptable and must end. And anti-slavery heroes are freeing people every day, and helping former slaves rebuild their lives.

Free the Slaves has the honor of working with such heroes around the world who inspire and inform our work. Free the Slaves (registered as Anti-Slavery International, Inc.) was founded in 2000 to help people in the United States harness their considerable economic and political power to end slavery. We are the sister organization of Anti-Slavery International in London, the base of the very first abolitionist movement. Anti-Slavery International has been operating continuously since 1839 and is the oldest human rights organization in the world.

Free the Slaves works to end slavery by raising awareness about modern slavery and what can be done to fight it; building a strong consumer movement for slave-free products and working with businesses to rid slavery from their supply chains; making slavery unprofitable by encouraging governments to enforce their own laws; and researching the nature of slavery and which responses are most effective in combating it. Most importantly, Free the Slaves supports grassroots anti-slavery organizations around the world that are leading slaves to freedom, and then offering the critical counseling, rights education and job training that leads to sustained freedom.

With the help of such grassroots activists, Ms. Kali and her neighbors banded together to confront the slaveholder to demand that he set them free. They also demanded the rights to a part of the quarry so they could work to support themselves. Ms. Kali told the slaveholder "If you cannot give us land like that then shoot us dead." The group held firm despite threats and beatings from the slaveholder's thugs, and finally he acquiesced. "Now we are not tied to anyone. We are buying and selling stones of our own. We are not tied to anyone. We are able to teach our children."

—JOLENE SMITH

PHOTO BY LLOYD EARL SUTTON, FREE THE SLAVES

In another stone quarry a few miles from where Ms. Kali works, these people are still enslaved.

MUSTE QUOTES

"To have dissent and opposition in wartime may create a problem for a democratic government, but if it does not have citizens who refuse to be coerced and regimented, it is no longer democratic."

(from A.J.'s statement to the Federal Grand Jury, December 21, 1965)

If you are making up your will, we hope you will consider leaving a bequest to the Muste Institute to ensure the continuation of our work in the future. A suggested simple wording to use in making bequests is: "I bequeath dollars ($_____) or percent of my estate to the A.J. Muste Memorial Institute, Inc., a charitable, not-for-profit organization located at 339 Lafayette Street, New York, New York, 10012, to be used for its general purposes." To discuss other types of bequests, such as those directed toward a specific purpose, please contact our office.

New Grants, February - May 2003

ASOCIACION CIVIL CENTRO ESPERANZA
Chiclayo, Peru: $4,000 (SFE)

This neighborhood organization promotes citizen participation and leadership among women, youth and children in the La Victoria district of the city of Chiclayo, in the northwestern Peruvian department of Lambayeque. This grant from our donor-advised Sheilah's Fund East goes for training, enrichment and development programs for children and adolescents.

CONTINENTAL CAMPAIGN TO COUNTER MILITARIZATION
Washington, DC: $2,500 (SFE)

The Continental Campaign to Counter Militarization was initiated by Nonviolence International, The Cry of the Excluded, Jubilee South/Americas, Convergence of Movements of the Peoples of the Americas (COMPA) and the Chiapas Forum Against Neoliberalism as a way to confront militarization in the Americas and develop alternative actions for peace and justice. This Sheilah's Fund East grant went for the Campaign's "First Hemispheric Forum Against Militarization," held May 6-9 in the southern Mexican state of Chiapas.

HOLY LAND TRUST
Bethlehem, Palestine: $3,000 (INTF)

Holy Land Trust, established in 1998 by Palestinians in the Occupied West Bank, supports the development of a strong, active and strategic nonviolent movement to further the Palestinian people's struggle for self-determination and freedom. This grant from the Institute's special International Nonviolence Training Fund (INTF) goes for the Nonviolence Core Group Training Program, developing a core group of trained Palestinian community leaders committed to initiating, organizing and participating in nonviolent activities.

INDIGENOUS WOMEN'S NETWORK
Austin, TX: $1,500

IWN was founded in 1985 to support the self-determination of indigenous women, families, communities and nations in the Americas and the Pacific basin. Since 1991 IWN has published *Indigenous Woman* magazine, a biannual publication sharing indigenous women's viewpoints. Our grant goes for a special issue of *Indigenous Woman*, focused on the impact of militarism, military service and war on indigenous communities.

JUST FOCUS
Albuquerque, NM: $1,500

Just Focus is a resource-sharing affiliation of eight groups working on global justice issues at a shared space in Albuquerque, New Mexico. This grant goes for the work of two of these groups, the ABQ Peace Values Project and the Ethics Brigade, challenging the interconnected issues of militarism, social and economic injustice and corruption in New Mexico. The state is home to two of the country's three national weapons laboratories and numerous other military facilities.

MINNESOTA ALLIANCE FOR PROGRESSIVE ACTION
St. Paul, MN: $1,500

MAPA is a statewide coalition of 27 labor, community and other grassroots organizations working to create progressive social change in Minnesota. This grant goes for a project working with organized labor to educate and mobilize union members and leaders in defense of civil rights for immigrants and communities of color.

"NEMASHIM" YOUTH PLAYS PEACE
TelAviv, Israel: $2,000

The "Nemashim" Project brings together Arab and Jewish Israeli youth to develop theater programs promoting inter-ethnic dialogue and equality in Israel, and to address other social issues facing residents of the mixed Arab-Jewish town of Ramle. The youth volunteers will live together for a year as they develop programs including street theater, forum performances, and drama and puppet-making workshops. The project is sponsored by Friendship Village, an international educational center promoting peace and democracy.

NIGER DELTA PROJECT FOR ENVIRONMENT, HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEVELOPMENT (NDPEHRD)
Rivers State, Nigeria: $2,000

This organization was formed in August 1999 in the Niger River Delta in Nigeria, where decades of crude oil drilling by the Elf Totalfina oil company has led to serious environmental destruction, social breakdown and human rights abuses, with the complicity of the Nigerian government. This grant goes for meetings, educational materials, training workshops and community dialogues among the Egi people, with the goal of channeling community frustration into nonviolent resistance in favor of environmental rights and justice.

SECRETARIADO INTERNACIONAL DE SOLIDARIDAD (SICSAL)
Mexico City, Mexico: $4,000 (SFE)

This Latin America-wide church-based network was founded in honor of Salvadoran archbishop Oscar Romero, shortly after his assassination in 1980. Bishop Samuel Ruiz, formerly of Chiapas, now plays an active role in the network. This Sheilah's Fund East donor-advised grant goes for SICSAL's work promoting peace, social justice and solidarity with the peoples of Latin America.

SER PAZ
Guayaquil, Ecuador: $10,000 (SFE)

This Sheilah's Fund East donor-advised grant goes for the work of SER PAZ with high school students and at risk youth in the urban area of Guayaquil, Ecuador, providing peer conflict resolution and education toward building a culture of peace.

SERVICIO PAZ Y JUSTICIA (SERPAJ)-AMERICA LATINA
San Jose, Costa Rica: $15,000 (SFE)

This Sheilah's Fund East donor-advised grant goes for the regional coordinating office of SERPAJ (Peace and Justice Service), a network of nonviolence organizations in Latin America. The coordinating office rotates every three years; this year it moved from Uruguay to Costa Rica. SERPAJ chapters focus on such issues as human rights, the environment, labor rights, women's rights, indigenous rights and conscientious objection to military service.

SERPAJ–URUGUAY
Montevideo, Uruguay: $4,000.00 (SFE)

This SERPAJ chapter was formed in 1981 when Uruguay was still under a military dictatorship. This Sheilah's Fund East donor-advised grant goes for general support of SERPAJ's work including peace and human rights education in schools; legal and other support for jailed activists and family members of the detained-disappeared; and efforts to end impunity for human rights abusers.

The A.J. Muste Memorial Institute makes small grants to groups doing nonviolent organizing for social change. Our next deadlines for proposals are July 18 and October 10, 2003.